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ABSTRACT

This report focuses on principals' satifaction with services provided by the School District of Philadelphia's Facilities Management and Services. In the spring of 1988 questionnaires were sent to all principals in the system and a total of 172 returns (61 percent) were received. Tabulated in frequencies, the results demonstrated that the majority of principals felt that communications with Facilities Services personnel had improved compared to former years. In every district except Districts 4 and 6, the majority of principals reported that they had received more service in 1987-88. The response time to work orders, cleaning, and routine maintenance were still seen as problematic, but overall, the performance of Facilities Management and Services improved. In general, District 8 principals reported the highest satisfaction and District 6 principals the lowest satisfaction regarding turnaround time for work orders, cleaning, and routine maintenance. (JAM)

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REPORT OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES SURVEY

REPORT NO. 8906

JULY 1988

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
PRIORITY OPERATIONS EVALUATION SERVICES
SCHOOL ORGANIZATION UNIT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Report No.8906
July, 1988

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ABSTRACT

A survey of satisfaction with services provided by Facilities Management and Services was conducted in the Spring of 1988 at the request of the Associate Superintendent . Questionnaires were sent to all principals in the system and a total of 172 returns (61%) were received. Returns by level were:

109 of 184 Elementary Schools (59%)

32 of 39 Middle/Junior High Schools (82%)

28 of 39 High Schools (72%)

3 Special or Administrative Centers

Returns by district were:

District 1 - 21 of 34 schools (62%)

District 2 - 28 of 36 schools (78%)

District 4 - 22 of 31 schools (71%)

District 5 - 30 of 34 schools (88%)

District 6 - 18 of 28 schools (64%)

District 7 - 26 of 36 schools (72%)

District 8 - 17 of 28 schools (61%)

High School Cluster - 10 of 19 Schools (53%)

The majority of principals in every district felt that communications with Facilities Services personnel had improved compared with former years. In every district, except Districts 4 and 6, the majority of principals also reported that they had received more service in 1987-1988.

In general, District 8 principals reported the highest satisfaction and District 6 principals the lowest satisfaction regarding turn-around time for work orders, cleaning, and routine maintenance. Across the districts, principals produced a long list of needs that required attention. Recommendations were made regarding the system of responding to work orders, and personnel problems.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES

Principal Survey

Spring 1988

A survey of all principals in the system was conducted in the Spring of 1988 at the request of the Associate Superintendent of Facilities Management and Services. The purpose of the survey was to obtain feedback regarding changes which had been made in the delivery of services to the schools.

QUESTION 1

Have you had one or more conferences with the District Assistant Manager during this school year?

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
N =	21	28	22	30	18	26	17	10
% YES	100%	93%	100%	100%	100%	92%	100%	100%
% NO	0	7%	0	0	0	8%	0	0

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

The overwhelming majority of principals reported that they had had at least one conference with the District Assistant Manager.

PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

Conferences generally centered around concerns that fell into the following categories: the back-log of work orders (27%); personnel problems (22%); maintenance (20%); cleaning (14%); and, repairs (12%). (See page 4)

CONCERNS DISCUSSED AT CONFERENCES

The major concerns discussed at conferences (by district) were:

District 1 (N=21)*

* work orders (6 schools) **
* cleaning (6 schools)
* maintenance (6 schools)

District 2 (N=28)

* work orders (7 schools)
* personnel problems (7 schools)
* maintenance (5 schools)

District 4 (N=22)

* personnel problems (9 schools)
* work orders (7 schools)

District 5 (N=30)

* work orders (11 schools)
* personnel problems (9 schools)

District 6 (N=18)

* personnel problems (6 schools)
* maintenance (6 schools)

District 7 (N=26)

* work orders (6 schools)
* maintenance (4 schools)

District 8 (N=17)

* work orders (5 schools)
* maintenance (4 schools)

H.S. Cluster (N=10)

* cleaning (4 schools)
* maintenance (3 schools)

Note: * The number of schools responding to the questionnaire within each district

** The number of schools expressing this concern

QUESTION 2

What, if any change in turn-around time for work orders have you observed this year as compared to former years?

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
No. Schools	21	28	22	30	18	26	17	10
Turn-around Time								
% shorter	41%	45%	38%	43%	28%	46%	76%	40%
% longer	0	10%	5%	3%	33%	11%	6%	10%
% about the same	41%	34%	57%	50%	28%	38%	18%	40%
% no response	18%	10%	0	3%	11%	4%	0	10%

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

District 8 had the highest percentage of principals (76%) who indicated that turn-around time was shorter. District 6 had the lowest percentage (28%).

PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

Principals in every district commented on the high number of incomplete work orders still remaining. In general, minor problems were handled quickly, while major problems took a long time or never got addressed. Problems most frequently cited as remaining unaddressed included plumbing, carpentry and electrical work.

Principals reported that they saw no uniformity in how work orders were expedited. Some felt that there was a need for a more efficient system of issuing jobs to mechanics.

QUESTION 3

Approximately how many work orders have been submitted from your school this year?

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
AVG. # PER SCHOOL	85	74	69	88	76	68	46	81
	(N=17)	(N=20)	(N=18)	(N=23)	(N=10)	(N=18)	(N=9)	(N=10)

AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORK ORDERS BY LEVEL

Elementary	Middle/Jr. High	High School
71 (N=76)	71 (N=32)	95 (N=28)

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

Districts 1, 5 and the High School Cluster had the highest average number of work orders (81 - 88) and District 8 the lowest (46). An analysis by level, indicated that High Schools had a higher average number of work orders (95) than the Elementary and Middle/Junior High Schools (71).

PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

The most frequent complaint regarding work orders was that many were submitted years ago and remain unattended.

QUESTION 3 (cont.)

Is this less than past years? (The number of work orders)

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
No. of Schools	21	28	22	30	18	26	17	10
Number of Work Orders								
% More	27%	24%	24%	13%	28%	19%	6%	40%
% Less	18%	14%	38%	23%	17%	27%	12%	10%
% About the Same	27%	52%	33%	53%	28%	42%	76%	30%
% No Response	27%	10%	5%	10%	28%	11%	6%	20%

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

Forty percent of the principals in the High School Cluster reported an increase in the number of work orders for the year. Thirty-eight percent of the principals in District 4 indicated that there was a decrease in the number of work orders.

QUESTION 4

When there were delays in work order turn-around, was the reason for the delay explained to you?

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
No. of Schools	21	28	22	30	18	26	17	10
Delays in Turn-around								
% YES	45%	66%	38%	50%	39%	46%	82%	50%
% NO	45%	27%	62%	47%	55%	42%	18%	50%
% NO RESPONSE	9%	7%	0	3%	6%	12%	0	0

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

District 8 had the highest percentage of principals (82%) who indicated that the reason for delays was explained to them. Districts 4 and 6 had the lowest percentage of principals (38% and 39% respectively) reporting that the reason for delays was explained to them.

QUESTION 5

Do you feel that you have been receiving more service from Facilities Services this year as compared to former years?

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
No. of Schools	21	28	22	30	18	26	17	10
Received More Services								
% YES	54%	76%	48%	77%	39%	65%	8?%	60%
% NO	9%	14%	24%	7%	28%	19%	6%	20%
% About the Same	23%	7%	28%	17%	28%	15%	12%	10%
% No Response	13%	3%	0	0	6%	0	0	10%

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

The majority of principals in every district, with the exception of Districts 6 and 4 (39% and 48% respectively), felt that they had been receiving more service.

PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

Principals felt that a concentrated effort had been made by facilities staff to be more responsive. However, even with the increase in visits and improved communications, a number of principals indicated that such efforts did not necessarily result in more action.

QUESTION 6

Have you noticed any improvements in the cleaning of your school this year as compared to former years?

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
No. of Schools	21	28	22	30	18	26	17	10
Improvements in Cleaning								
% YES	41%	34%	28%	40%	28%	35%	65%	30%
% NO	27%	21%	52%	33%	44%	38%	18%	20%
% About the Same	23%	40%	14%	27%	22%	27%	18%	40%
% No Response	9%	7%	5%	0	6%	0	0	10%

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

The majority of District 8 principals (65%) noticed improvements in the cleaning of their schools. This, however, was not the case in any other district, and again the lowest percentages were in Districts 4 and 6 (28%). In addition, 52% of the District 4 principals reported that cleaning had not improved compared to former years.

PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

Absenteeism appeared to pose a serious problem throughout the School District and hampered the effective cleaning of school buildings. Principals discussed the lack of substitute service, unstable cleaning crews, shortage of staff due to failures to fill vacancies and personnel turnover. Some principals also expressed concerns regarding the poor management skills of some Building Engineers, the inadequate supervision of cleaning staff and the need to monitor absenteeism. A few principals expressed concern regarding the hours scheduled for cleaning staff and a desire to return to early and late shifts.

QUESTION 7

Has routine maintenance been more effective in your school this year as compared to former years?

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
No. of Schools	21	28	22	30	18	26	17	10
More Effective Maintenance								
% YES	27%	52%	38%	50%	28%	35%	70%	50%
% NO	23%	17%	24%	17%	44%	23%	12%	10%
% About the Same	41%	27%	33%	30%	22%	38%	12%	30%
% No Response	9%	3%	5%	3%	6%	4%	6%	10%

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

Fifty to 70% of the principals in Districts 2,5,8 and the High School Cluster indicated that routine maintenance had been more effective in their school compared to former years. Districts 1 and 6 had the lowest percentage who felt this way (27% and 28% respectively). District 6 also had the highest percentage of principals (44%) who reported that routine maintenance had not been more effective.

PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

According to the principals, the effectiveness of routine maintenance depended on the quality of the Building Engineer. Some felt that the lack of staff in their school, as well as the district, hindered work completion.

QUESTION 8

Have communications with Facilities Services personnel improved this year as compared to former years?

DISTRICT	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	H.S. CLUSTER
No. of Schools	21	28	22	30	18	26	17	10
Communications Improvement								
% YES	73%	86%	71%	83%	55%	81%	88%	60%
% NO	4%	0	10%	0	11%	8%	0	10%
% About the Same	13%	7%	14%	17%	28%	4%	12%	20%
% No Response	9%	7%	5%	0	6%	8%	0	10%

TABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

The majority of principals in each district reported that communications with Facilities Services personnel had improved compared with former years. District 8 had the highest percentage of principals (88%) who felt this way, District 6 the lowest percentage (55%).

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Across the districts, principals produced a litany of needs including: cleaning, inside and outside maintenance, roofing, plumbing, glazing, electrical work, carpentry, locksmith work, plastering, painting, heating, air-conditioning, carpeting, exterminating, ironwork, and asbestos removal.

Recommendations focused on two major areas of concern: work orders and personnel issues.

A. WORK ORDERS:

Principals expressed frustration over their lack of information regarding work orders. Recommendations were:

1. principals should have a copy of each work order on file

2. principals should receive written communication regarding work orders and an approximate timeline, even if the job cannot be done within a year

3. a computer program could be developed to handle the above concerns

Similarly, principals reiterated the need for a more efficient system of responding to work orders. The following suggestions were made by one or more principals:

1. train custodial staff to repair small jobs

2. focus on the logic of repairs e.g., roof before floor

3. complete all repairs in one category when in the school

4. monitor mechanics more effectively - many drag out a job and come without materials or parts and then leave for several hours

5. ensure that workers are returned to a school to complete a job, if they are pulled out for emergencies

6. change the process for renovations - each trade waits to complete task which causes delays and is highly inefficient

7. assign a team of one plumber, electrician, carpenter and mechanic to each district. If each district has a machine shop within the district, much travel time could be saved and more time made available to perform routine maintenance.

B. PERSONNEL ISSUES:

1. establish a pool of qualified personnel to replace absentees
2. control, monitor absenteeism
3. offer overtime for those who come to work as a way of combatting absenteeism
4. personnel should be assigned according to the needs of the building
5. need to hire and place well-trained, qualified personnel
6. need for full complement of staff and staff stability
7. need for more supervision of personnel
8. need for more efficient training system
9. processing of complaints re: job performance needs to be speeded up (suggested by 1 or 2 principals)
10. entire procedure for employee discipline needs to be revised. Principal must have a greater role (suggested by 1 or 2 principals).

C. SUPPLIES/EQUIPMENT

Principals indicated a need for:

1. proper materials and cleaning supplies that work
2. a more effective system for repairing and ordering equipment
3. returning the budget to the principal so that purchases (cleaning supplies, minor hardware) could be made (suggested by 2 or 3 principals).

SUMMARY

The majority of principals in each district reported that communications with Facilities Services Personnel had improved compared with former years. With the exception of Districts 4 and 6, the majority of principals also reported receiving more service than in previous years.

Principals in every district commented on the high number of incomplete work orders, and the need for a more efficient system of handling the back-log of orders. The majority of principals in every district but District 8 did not perceive improvements in the cleaning of their schools, which they attributed to high absenteeism. Routine maintenance, however, was viewed as having improved by most principals in Districts 2, 5, 8 and the High School Cluster. The quality of the Building Engineer in each school was considered a critical factor.

In conclusion, it is clear that a great deal of work still remains to be done in many schools and that personnel issues require attention.